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Spring/Summer 1994

CULTURAL PARTNERSHIPS FOR AT-RISK CHILDREN AND YOUTH

SUMMARY

This bill would provide twenty million dollars a year to the Department of Education for grants to schools and cultural organizations which enter into joint enterprises to provide arts education programs.

Under the plan, schools and cultural institutions would submit grant proposals for particular partnership programs of artistic and cultural education targeted toward at-risk youth. The definition of "at-risk youth" is linked to the Chapter 1 schoolwide project threshold as proposed by the Administration: youth in schools or school districts serving a population group of whom at least sixty-five percent are below the poverty line (becoming fifty percent in 1996-97). The applications would be considered and the funds disbursed by a Committee comprised of two members each from NEA, NEH, IMS and the Department of Education. The federal share of funding for these programs is to be eighty percent.

We have also included a provision requiring that NEA, NEH and IMS receive funding at FY 1994 levels before any dollars can flow to this program. Finally, we have required the Committee to ensure non-duplication of services with those already provided by the three agencies.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR CLAIBORNE PELL

Mr. President, I rise in support of the Cultural Partnerships for At-Risk Children and Youth Act. This bill would provide a small but meaningful educational grant program to benefit at-risk children around our nation. Grants would be awarded to partnerships between cultural organizations such as museums, arts agencies or institutions of higher education and Chapter 1 schools for purposes of educating young people in cultural activities. These grants will leverage local cultural resources for the benefit of at-risk children and youth.

Research by the J. Paul Getty Foundation has shown that when students receive cultural education, they transfer their acquired problem-solving skill and self discipline to other subjects such as Math, English and History. A recent study by the University of Chicago showed that students who received significant arts education scored higher on the Scholastic Aptitude Test than those who received little such education.

The Committee which will analyze grant requests and provide the awards is structured in order to make maximum use of the federal dollar. The Department of Education has the greatest experience in distributing grants to schools while the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Endowment for the Arts and the Institute of Museum Services will contribute their expertise in the disciplines of the humanities and the arts and museum programs so that they can identify the highest quality projects to target at-risk youth and avoid duplication of programs and efforts. Mr. President, this legislation is a modest but much needed boost to at-risk children around our country and I urge my colleagues to support it.